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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000962

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ID](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: BURMA/INDONESIA -- ACTIVIST FORUM ON AUNG SAN SUU
KYYI AND ROHINGYAS

REF: A. JAKARTA 917
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 446
[1](#)C. (08) JAKARTA 481

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: As a follow-up to USG-sponsored civil society and student conferences held last year, an association of Indonesian activist groups recently sponsored a public forum on the human rights crisis in Burma and the plight of Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). The event demonstrated ongoing Indonesian concern about the situation in Burma. As part of our effort to help stimulate awareness of the Burma situation, Mission is working with activists regarding an event that would be held on June 19, ASSK's birthday. END SUMMARY.

INDONESIAN FORUM RE BURMA

[1](#)2. (U) The situation in Burma is an ongoing concern in Indonesia. Activists recently sponsored a forum to update the public on the plight of imprisoned Burma democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and the Rohingya situation (see more below). Under the umbrella of the Human Rights Watch Group (HRWG), an association of Indonesian civil society organizations, the forum sought to raise awareness on developments in Burma and underscore that Indonesia--as an ASEAN member--can play a key role in encouraging the regime to respect human rights. A crowd of about 150 people attended the May 29 event. Poloff also participated.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The forum's main speaker was a Burmese democracy activist. The activist, Khin Ohmar, updated the group on the ongoing ASSK trial. Ohmar averred that ASSK is critical to reconciliation efforts in Burma due to her ability to draw large-scale support from a cross-section of Burmese national society. The Burmese government is using the trial as a pretext to continue ASSK's arrest and perhaps place further restrictions on her ahead of the 2010 elections in Burma, he stressed.

CALLING FOR FURTHER REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

[1](#)4. (U) In response, Indonesian activists called for further regional and international pressure on Burma. They also demanded the immediate release of ASSK.

[1](#)5. (C) Influential Indonesian Member of Parliament and member of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), Marzuki Darusman, called on ASEAN to engage in a new strategy to address the deteriorating human rights situation. Darusman called for ASEAN to suspend Burma from the body and advocated economic sanctions that would target the regime's natural resources trade. Darusman has told us that he

intends to press these points in upcoming meetings with other MP's from ASEAN countries. He added that he has spoken with Chinese and Indian officials, urging that these countries take steps to pressure the Burma regime.

DON'T FORGET THE ROHINGYAS

¶6. (SBU) The situation of the Muslim Rohingya group was also discussed by the group. Darusman said the social conditions in Burma are inextricably linked to the plight of the Rohingya refugees. He noted that migrant outflows threaten stability in Southeast Asia and he urged the Burmese regime to take steps to protect the Rohingyas from discrimination.

¶7. (SBU) The Rohingya situation is highly pertinent to Indonesia. Two large groups of Rohingyas were rescued off Indonesian shores in January and February, and they are currently being held in camps in Sumatra. NGO's remain concerned that any repatriation efforts should take place within the existing Indonesian legal framework keeping in mind the safety of the Rohingyas and international law. Activists told us that no Rohingya should be forcibly returned to Burma. While some GOI officials have made equivocal statements to the press, the GOI has pledged to us that it would protect and take care of the Rohingyas as recommended by UNHCR, which has given them protective status (ref A).

TRYING TO STIMULATE CONCERN

¶8. (SBU) The recent forum was inspired by a March 2008 USG-funded regional civil society conference on democracy and

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human rights in Burma. This conference was organized by the same civil society coalition, the HRWG (ref C), that sponsored the May 29 event. This event also follows on the heels of another USG-funded program, the "Burma Roadshow," organized by the AIPMC to raise awareness on university campuses (ref B). As part of our effort to help stimulate awareness of the Burma situation, Mission is working with activists regarding an event that would be held on June 19, ASSK's birthday.

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